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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

SECOND LANGUAGE URDU

GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 3248/01
Composition and Translation

General comments

This was the first examination of the new 3248 Syllabus. In general the performance of candidates was more than satisfactory, with the majority producing very good performances.

Comments on specific questions

Part 1

Directed Writing

This question took the form of an essay-writing competition, asking candidates to give their opinion on:

”نوجوانوں میں اردو اخبارات میں دلچسپی کیسے پیدا کی جائے؟“

“How can young people get interested in Urdu newspapers”

Three bullet points were given which indicated clearly what should be included. The question gave candidates an ideal opportunity to demonstrate their linguistic ability and the most able candidates produced excellent, well planned and constructed compositions giving reasons why young people did not read Urdu newspapers (only politics, crime and violence) what subjects should be covered (more sport, arts, music, fashion, quizzes, etc.) and what else could be done (encouragement from parents and schools etc.). Most were able to cover the points using examples of their own and gained at least 4 out of 5 marks for the content of their compositions. Candidates lost marks if they did not cover all the bullet points adequately. The main difficulty for many candidates was not the content but the language and/or length. Candidates are expected to be able to write and spell everyday words correctly, especially if these words are included in the question. As to length, the prescribed length of 150 words was carefully chosen to allow candidates sufficient length to respond to the question fully yet concisely. Many candidates wrote well over the word limit due to writing lengthy and unnecessary introductions which were not required in the instructions, about why they had decided to enter the competition. It cannot be stressed too much that it is very important to follow the rubrics for each question if high marks are to be achieved.

Part 2

Letter, report, dialogue or speech

This question provided candidates with a choice of either:

(a) a report for a newspaper on a school fund-raising event

or

(b) a dialogue about persuading a parent to send their child to a boarding school in another city.

There was a fairly equal number of responses for each choice. The only real difficulty arose when a very few candidates wrote the second choice in the form of a letter or in one or two cases a dialogue with themselves. Again it must be stressed that reading the questions and rubrics carefully is the first task of anyone sitting for an examination.

The report was, on the whole, satisfactorily attempted by most candidates. They were expected to write about what they were fund raising for, what activities were performed, what they were like and how successful the event was.

The second option produced some extremely amusing, enjoyable and well written dialogues. This sort of argument is undoubtedly within the area of experience of many candidates. One common shortcoming was the over-reliance on the argument that going there 'because all my friends go there' as an argument likely to persuade reluctant parents.

Once again in this exercise few candidates kept to the word limit. Candidates would benefit from practice in planning and organising their writing so that they keep to the specified word limit.

Part 3

Translation

This question required candidates to translate a given passage into Urdu. Though the question was well attempted, the passage proved fairly difficult for many candidates, particularly the first paragraph. Though some candidates had difficulties in accuracy and spelling, they were able to gain marks if they conveyed a good sense of the meaning of the phrase or sentence in their translation.

Paper 3248/02

Language Usage, Summary and Comprehension

General comments

This was the first year of this new 3248 Syllabus and the overall performance of candidates was good. In general candidates' seemed to be well prepared for the examination and their presentation, handwriting, arrangement and vocabulary were of a high standard.

Comments on specific questions

Part 1

Language usage

The majority of candidates performed well in this section, though some candidates had difficulty transforming sentences into the passive voice. Candidates would benefit from practice in transforming a range of different types of sentences, for example, active to passive, indirect speech to direct speech etc. In the cloze passage candidates are required to select the five missing words and list them in the correct order, they do not need to copy out the whole passage. Most candidates tackled this exercise well.

Part 2

Summary

Candidates are required to read the passage given and then write a directed summary. The summary should cover all of the main points which are provided for the candidate in the form of prompts. The summary should cover the points in a concise and condensed form and should be no more than one hundred words in length. From June 2004 onwards the question paper will specify the word limit and candidates who write in excess of this will not gain the full marks available as they will not have achieved the purpose of the exercise.

Part 3

Comprehension

Passage A

This passage produced some excellent results from candidates. It is important that candidates read each of the questions carefully in order that their answers are clear and relevant.

Passage B

This passage, about the founder of Pakistan, was tackled very well by most candidates.